

Application No. 10/057,364
Amendment filed Concurrently with RCE

Customer No. 01933

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE CLAIMS

Claim 14 has been amended to clarify that the transmitting section of the image forming apparatus transmits the trouble type information to the relaying server through the Internet, and to clarify that the accessing section of the image forming apparatus accesses the relaying server and obtains restoration work information based on the trouble type information from the relaying server through the Internet.

In addition, claim 16 has been amended to make a minor grammatical improvement.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to claims 14 and 16 be approved and entered.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTION

Claims 14, 15, 17 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of USP 5,819,110 ("Motoyama") and US 2004/0012807 ("Konishi"); and claims 16, 18, 19, 20 and 24 were rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in

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view of the combination of Motoyama, Konishi and any one of USP 5,887,216 ("Motoyama '216"), USP 5,878,256 ("Bealkowski et al") or USP 6,618,162 ("Wiklof et al"). These rejections, however, are respectfully traversed.

According to the present invention as recited in clarified amended independent claim 14, an image forming apparatus administration system is provided which comprises: an image forming apparatus located in a first local network and connected to the Internet through a first firewall server of the first local network; and a relaying server located outside the first local network and connected to the Internet. As recited in amended independent claim 14, the image forming apparatus comprises: a transmitting section which transmits trouble type information to the relaying server through the Internet, an accessing section which accesses the relaying server and obtains restoration work information based on the trouble type information from the relaying server through the Internet, and a control section which controls the image forming apparatus to conduct an automatic restoration process in accordance with the restoration work information. And as recited in independent claim 14, the relaying server comprises a memory which stores the trouble type information transmitted from the image forming apparatus.

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With this structure, even if the image forming apparatus is connected to the Internet through a first firewall server, the image forming apparatus can transmit trouble type information to the relaying server. In addition, with this structure, the apparatus can access the relaying server based on the trouble type information so as to obtain restoration work information from the relay server, such that the image forming apparatus can conduct an automatic restoration process in accordance with the restoration work information.

On page 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner points out that Motoyama discloses business office machines that can access the Internet at column 12, lines 59-62 thereof, and the Examiner asserts that claim 14 does not explicitly recite that communication between the image forming apparatus and relaying server takes place via the internet.

In response, independent claim 14 has been amended to positively recite that the transmitting section of the image forming apparatus transmits the trouble type information to the relaying server through the Internet, and to positively recite that the accessing section of the image forming apparatus accesses the relaying server and obtains restoration work information based on the trouble type information from the relaying server through the Internet.

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In addition, it is respectfully pointed out that although the business machines disclosed in Motoyama can access the Internet, Motoyama discloses that the business machine should not use "connectionless-mode" communication unless the communication is low-priority (e.g. Internet email). For example, according to the teachings of Motoyama, the connectionless-mode of communication could be used to send monthly or weekly reports. However, Motoyama discloses that if the communication is high-priority, such as a communication regarding a repair that is required immediately, then the communication should be conducted in a "connection-mode" of communication (e.g. direct communication via telephone or ISDN line) . See column 8, lines 48-61 of Motoyama.

The Examiner acknowledges in item 6 on page 3 of the Office Action that Motoyama does not disclose a relaying server as recited in claim 14. For this reason, the Examiner has cited Konishi to supply the missing teaching of Motoyama.

It is respectfully submitted, however, that the relay server 31 of Konishi is different from the relaying server of the present invention as recited in independent claim 14. Namely, in Konishi, the printer 11 is connected to the network 23 via the relay server 31. By contrast, according to the structure of the claimed present invention, the image forming apparatus is located

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in a first local network and connected to the Internet through a first firewall server of the first local network, and the relaying server is outside the first local network, and communication between the two takes place via the internet. In addition, it is respectfully pointed out that according to Konishi, the relay server 31 is positioned between the network and the printer 11 so as to mediate communication between the printer 11 and host computers 21 and 51. In Konishi, the relay server 31 detects job processing information at the job processing information detection section 4 and sends the job processing information to the host computer 21 after the transfer management section 34 is consulted to determine the communication route for the job processing information. And in Konishi, the host computer 51 can request job processing information from the relay server 31 of Konishi.

It is respectfully submitted that if the teachings of Motoyama and Konishi were combinable as asserted by the Examiner, the resultant combination would suggest connecting the business machine of Motoyama to communication lines via a relay server to mediate communication to and from the business machine. Nevertheless, neither Motoyama nor Konishi, taken singly or in combination, suggests a relaying server provided outside of a local network in which the image forming apparatus is provided,

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whereby the image forming apparatus is connected to the Internet via a firewall and communication between the image forming apparatus and relaying server occurs via the Internet, as according to the present invention as recited in clarified amended independent claim 14.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 14, and claims 15-24 depending therefrom, clearly patentably distinguishes over Motoyama and Konishi, taken together or in combination with any of the other prior art references of record under 35 USC 103.

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Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

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